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VARIETIES OF SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION<sup>1</sup>

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C. WRIGHT Mills' concept of the "sociological imagination"—a contemporary fashionable equivalent to Charles H. Cooley's somewhat more comprehensive "sympathetic introspection" of fifty years ago—has proved to be valuable for understanding one of the scientific operations of the sociologist. This is the operation of selecting out from the seamless web of social reality that which is theoretically significant and socially meaningful for research and for relationship to other researchable variables. It involves a recognition that the best methods and techniques of research can yield no knowledge by themselves; the scientist must imagine correct hypotheses before he can prove (by other means) that they are correct and, to help him in this, he must relate himself in an optimal way to the cumulative knowledge of his discipline and to its application in practical social situations. He must relate himself to the data in such a way that he performs a creative act as he develops concepts, classifications, tests, comparisons, and conclusions for them.

The thesis of the present paper is that there is not merely one sociological imagination, but rather several kinds, and often they do not reside happily together in the same person. We shall start by drawing a distinction between two kinds of sociological imagination, found (if they are found at all)

in different national traditions and in different individual sociologists. The two kinds of sociological imagination are associated with macrosociological and microsociological research. National traditions of sociological research, at least at certain periods of time, tend to emphasize one type at the expense of the other. Only rarely—as in the case of a Cooley or a Simmel—are both forms found in the same individual. Many sociologists with superb capacity for one kind of sociological imagination may be almost blind toward the other kind.

American sociology has been sufficiently broad in its development range to include both traditions. During the 1930's and 1940's microsociology was dominant to the extent that excellent macrosociological research was rare, and it went unrecognized when it did occur. An innovative and perceptive macrosociological researcher like William F. Ogburn—who had achieved prominence in the discipline up through 1930—had little popularity among his sociological colleagues during the last three decades of his life. Fortunately for him, part of his work was in demography, and most of that subdiscipline has always been concerned primarily with the macro-level (and therefore, during large parts of its history in the United States estranged from the rest of sociology). Popularity among sociologists is like popularity anywhere else in the public: we tend to cheer for those with whom we agree and derogate others who exhibit a different kind of sociological imagination. This tendency to choose sides goes even so far as to result in the neglect of great sociologists who have

<sup>1</sup> Presidential address, written some time before Arnold Rose's untimely death (*The American Sociologist* 3 60-61); read by Caroline B. Rose at the 64th meeting of the American Sociological Association held in San Francisco, September, 1969.

an ample measure of several different kinds of sociological imagination. We tend to say that their strengths are balanced by their weaknesses, although we disagree as to which characteristics are their strengths and which their weaknesses. We no longer applaud the "Renaissance Man" who could do a bit of almost everything and do them all "passing well."

Let us now turn to the specific types of sociological imagination and start with the macrosociological ones. The first to emerge was an ability to see historical facts in the perspective of social forces and of cultural change. Historians through the ages had a measure of this, from Herodotus on, but sociology could not be said to have emerged until historical perspectives were applied to abstractions from history. Ibn Khaldun, Machiavelli, Adam Smith, and the other Scottish Empiricists Adam Ferguson and John Millar, are the pioneers here. Few sociologists today have this type of sociological imagination because they know so little about history. This is one reason for the paucity of great sociological interpretations of recent social changes and of the nature of social change generally.

Sociologists have done better when they moved out of a single historical perspective into comparative history. The sociological imagination manifests itself in comparative history by the specification of significant similarities or differences in the histories of diverse societies. One of our best here, of course, was Max Weber. So much distorted interpretation has been given to his work on the Protestant ethic that we must repeat his simple hypothesis. He was essentially interested in supplementing and correcting Karl Marx. Whereas Marx held that economic structure was the substratum which molded the forms of all other aspects of culture, including religion and other forms of ideology, Weber wished to demonstrate that causation could work both ways—the economy could determine the religion, but the religion also "selected" the economy. So he examined five great world religions and the societies in which they were dominant to show that free-enterprise capitalism could emerge in only one of them.

Durkheim used the comparative technique of the anthropologist rather than the his-

torian, first in his expression of two types of social solidarity emerging from two forms of the division of labor, and later in his perception that it was the crowd identification of society with self which provided the original motivation for all religion. In the first study—his thesis of 1893—he inquired into the basic distinction between simple and complex societies. The *Suicide* of 1899 was also a comparative study of national and regional statistical rates, based on imaginative knowledge of the nation and regions for which the rates were used. In his later investigation of the "Elementary Forms of the Religious Life," he sought similarities in the rise of religious faiths in all societies, simple and complex. Durkheim had to have a tremendous knowledge of the facts about diverse societies in order to develop and test his great insights. So few of us sociologists have this knowledge today that we cannot even comprehend well what Durkheim was saying. His ideas are mistakenly fitted into some narrow contemporary perspective, whereas Durkheim quite properly looked for the origin of religion in universal human experiences as they might occur in diverse settings. After rejecting other theories as not in accord with known facts, he emerged with the theory that it is in group excitement that the individual feels his self merging with something indefinitely larger and more powerful, which incorporates him by its very power and which he can symbolically incorporate by eating a piece of it, and for which there are symbols in the forms of totems, crosses, human and animal figures, churinga or bell sounds, wafers and wine, and so on. The subsequent exercise of religious faith is in ideological justifications and repetitions, usually only in ritual and symbolic form, of the original religious experience, although periodically the collective excitement may be renewed in great mystic experiences or religious revivals.

Penetrating the "seamless web of history," or the description of the life and culture of any society, even a very simple one, with a limited hypothesis or question, is a difficult task. It requires sociological imagination of a very definite type to be able to use historical or ethnological materials accurately and meaningfully in order to test a sociological hypothesis. It involves a selective process as

to what is relevant and an abstractive process of separating some fact from a context which is not naturally separable. (A sociologist can do this selection and abstraction either well or poorly; if he does it well, he displays one kind of sociological imagination.) If, in addition, there is comparison of historical and ethnological materials, comparing two or more cultures or the same culture at two or more time periods, the sociologist is faced with several additional tasks which he can do either well or poorly. He ought not to be misled by superficial similarities or superficial differences, and not mistake the appearance for the substance. One of the easiest ways to be misled is to accept the ordinary translation of any given social phenomenon from one language to another. The sociologist must first find out what people *mean* when they behave in terms of this phenomenon and then make his own translation. For example, a French *syndicat du travail* is not, in many respects, the same institution as an American or English trade union, although translators almost invariably regard them as the same. A better translation for a sociologist would be "an organization of workers using *political* means to seek improvement in their economic position." This is clumsy language, making a distinction perhaps unnecessary for newspaper translation, but quite important for the social scientist.

The members of a given society may be unaware that they have a certain cultural characteristic or practice, and the comparative sociologist or anthropologist must try to discern it before he corroborates its non-existence. There is a covert culture,<sup>2</sup> part of which is deliberately hidden but another part of which is unconscious. During the course of my own research I have used several techniques to ferret out the covert culture of a foreign society or of a subgroup within our own society, and I would briefly describe these techniques now. Most of them involve some way of getting at contradictions and ambivalences of behavior or attitude. One technique is simply to listen for logical noncompatibilities in the conversations of

<sup>2</sup> Arnold M. Rose, *Theory and Method in the Social Sciences*, Chapter 21, "Popular Logic in the Study of Covert Culture." Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1954.

a wide range of people. The dramatic example of this is frequently offered by racists who claim the disgust all honest white men feel in close bodily contact with Negroes but, almost in the same breath, tell about their love for mammies or ask "Would you want your daughter to marry a Negro?" (implying that, under certain social circumstances which they hope to avoid, the daughter might *want* to marry a Negro.) Another technique is to provoke the expression of nonconventional but widely-held attitudes by "experimental interviewing,"<sup>3</sup> which means (1) to ask a deliberately biased and provocative question rather than a neutral one, (2) to offer a supposedly personal and unconventional point of view before asking a question about the subject, or (3) to allege certain facts that would make it difficult to maintain the conventional attitude. Unconventional response to this kind of questioning does not, by itself, prove the existence of a covert attitude or practice, but it provides an opening for further probing.

A third technique to ascertain covert culture is to offer a list of adjectives or descriptive phrases of all sorts, and to ask samples of the population to check the ones which describe the institution or other cultural practices about which the investigator suspects there may be covert culture. When contradictory descriptions are checked, there is a clue not only to the existence of covert culture but also its nature. In researches on attitudes toward ethnic groups it has been found, for example, that Jews are described as both clannish and pushy, Negroes as both sexually repulsive and sensually attractive, and that undesirable racial characteristics are both immutable and as something to be repressed.

A fourth technique to discern covert culture can be utilized when popular written materials are available, in the form of stories, songs, and folk-literature generally. The investigator can then pull out all metaphors, similes, analogies, and other figures of speech and ask why certain ones were used rather than certain others. If a particular figure

<sup>3</sup>Arnold M. Rose, "A Research Note on Experimentation in Interviewing," *American Journal of Sociology*, 51 (September, 1945), pp. 143-144.

of speech is used repeatedly and reflects an ambiguity or a contradiction of attitude, he again has a strong clue concerning the existence and nature of a covert culture trait.

None of these techniques are sure-fire, but they permit the accumulation of evidence. The investigator must have sociological imagination to use these delicate and uncertain instruments effectively, and, in addition to sociological imagination, he must have the sensitivity to guess that a certain area of life has the probability of concealing covert culture. In American culture, the areas of race and sex are teeming with covert culture traits, but this may not be true in other cultures. Sometimes the covert culture characteristic reveals itself strikingly, as in the shape of the official German exhibit building at the Montreal Exposition of 1967, which resembles closely a map of prewar Germany, showing Danzig and the Polish Corridor as part of Germany—an aspiration which no German official has openly admitted since World War II. Usually, however, covert culture has to be pressed out of people or cultural manifestations. Covert culture is betrayed rather than blatantly expressed, and it takes a kind of sociological imagination to discern when it is being betrayed.

The search for social forces operating in macroscopic social change involves still another kind of sociological imagination. The term "social forces" has not been popular among sociologists for several decades, even though it is also the name of one of our respected journals, but I believe it is a most useful concept in macrosociological research. Sociologists like Thorstein Veblen, Howard Odum, William F. Ogburn, and their contemporaries who made use of this concept, usually showed a good deal of imagination in discerning the keystones of stability and change in the social structure. Theirs was not the imagination of the historian, but one independent in its own right. Veblen and Ogburn stressed the interpenetration of economic and sociological forces and motives. "Conspicuous consumption" could not be gainsaid as a device both to express the social pecking order and to establish position and influence in economic relationships. A major technological breakthrough could be shown to have waves of consequences not

only on the further development of technology, but also on economic structure, social institutions, and cultural expressions. It required great knowledge of, and insight into, a society to ascertain which social forces had the greatest impact and to trace through the direct and indirect influences through hundreds of social phenomena. Ogburn, for example, wrote a whole book tracing the influences of the innovation of the airplane on most aspects of American life.<sup>4</sup> Many sociologists do not attribute much significance to this book, and others like it because they do not know much about the society in which they live, or see the interconnectedness of its parts.

The prediction of the future of a certain aspect of a society also involves the imaginative selection, out of the welter of social forces impinging on it and the complex social changes occurring within it, just those crucial forces and changes which are molding its future course. While projection of existing trends sometimes offers a good prediction, a more imaginative analysis of forces and changes usually offers a better prediction. The authors of *An American Dilemma*<sup>5</sup> more than twenty-five years ago predicted, contrary to the opinion among most social scientists based on the then-existing situation, that American society was ripe for many radical changes in race relations. And the present author followed this up five years later<sup>6</sup> by observing that Negroes themselves were increasingly unwilling to accept a subordinate position in American society, and that their protests against their lower status would likely grow and take stronger forms of expression.

Let us now turn to the diverse forms of sociological imagination associated with research and data sometimes called micro-

<sup>4</sup> William F. Ogburn, *The Social Effects of Aviation*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1946.

<sup>5</sup> Gunnar Myrdal with the assistance of Richard Sterner and Arnold Rose, *An American Dilemma*. New York: Harper, 1944.

<sup>6</sup> Arnold M. Rose, *The Negro's Morale: Group Identification and Protest*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1949. In his 1963 presidential address, Everett Hughes raised the question why sociologists did not foresee the explosively growing force of the Negro protest. I believe I did, in this 1949 book. See: Everett C. Hughes, "Race Relations and the Sociological Imagination," *American Sociological Review*, 28 (1963), pp. 879-891.

scopic. An important line of difference here is in the degree to which the researcher would structure or leave fluid his relationship with those being interviewed. Obviously, structuring is necessary where the researcher does not do his own interviewing, but either hires interviewers or provides questionnaires for the respondents to fill out themselves, in order to get enough cases and representative cases so that he may generalize statistically about some aspect of human behavior. The opportunity for sociological imagination in these survey studies comes in at several points in the study. The first is the formulation of the problem. What often starts out as a trivial question in market research or the evaluation of success or failure of some agency program can become restated as an intriguing question at the heart of sociological theory. The ascertaining of why a given product or program is a "success" while another is a "failure" can lead to discoveries about basic aspects of human motivation and social structure—if such studies are carried on with sociological imagination. Second, there is the formulation of the questions. It is too often true in survey research that neutral, superficial questions, calling merely for "yes" or "no" responses, are asked. But the imaginative survey researcher, who knows the many kinds of obstacles that occur between his formulation in his own mind of what he wants to know from the respondents and getting the respondents to order their thoughts (knowledge or attitudes) in such a way that they can respond with the relevant answers, is the one who spends a great deal of time on his questions. He will use "experimental" type questions as well as neutrally-worded questions, he will break a question up into several sub-questions, he will question on depth of feeling and strength of conviction concerning the central attitude question, he will order his questions in a certain way, and above all he will pretest his questions over and over again on a few well-chosen cases to check whether they are evoking in the minds of the respondent what he expects them to evoke. Assuming that the interviewers—also trained with some sociological imagination—do an adequate job and that the respondents have found the questions important or interesting enough to answer with some attention, the researcher

faces another task of tremendous sociological and psychological imagination when he comes to the analysis of the data. First, there is the coding of the "free answers" or other answers to open-ended questions. These answers are not meaningful in themselves; they must be interpreted in the light of answers to other questions and classified meaningfully. But the chief opportunity for exercise of the sociological imagination for the survey researcher comes when he is testing hypotheses, and needs to hold various factors constant, assuming that he has earlier had the imagination to ask all the questions necessary to provide himself with indexes to measure those possibly confusing factors. Then the researcher must read and re-read samples of his completed schedules to probe—in so far as he can in this distant way—what must have been in the minds of the respondents as they gave their answers. Then he sorts his IBM or McBee cards in various ways to try out modifications of his hypotheses. The one with whom I had the privilege of studying and working, who made a real art of survey research, and who taught me what the sociological imagination was in the use of this method, was the late Professor Samuel A. Stouffer.

Quite different from the survey researcher and with even more feeling of the individual case is the sociological investigator who does case studies. If he were not repelled by Freud's elaborations of dubious and untestable theory, he would acknowledge Freud as the master of getting more and more information from the single case—by deep interview, by "trick" questions, by free association and by all the ingenious projective tests discovered by Freud's followers. Of course, the purpose of a sociologist is not to probe individual personality and motivations for their own sake but to ascertain these in relationship to behavior, overt and covert, toward another person or other persons. The sociologist is interested in individual behavior only in so far as it means interaction and interrelationships with others. But the techniques of gathering information on the individual case are not unique to the sociologist; they are shared to a considerable extent by the clinical psychologist and the anthropologist. They involve getting the subject to report his various roles as he sees them, his

perceptions of cultural and social structural factors impinging on him, his self-conception and his conception of the scope of his individual freedom, his perceptions of and attitudes toward the social situation confronting him, and a dozen lesser matters—depending on the specific purpose of the interview. The investigator with sociological imagination never forgets that the respondent is not merely someone who is providing verbal reactions to questions, but is an embodiment of a culture, several subcultures, a portion of the social structure, and an individual with a life history and a lively perception of the future. The imaginative social scientist is properly skeptical toward the information given him by the participants in the social life he is studying, and he knows that common sense is not science. On the other hand, he does not go to the opposite fallacy: What we observe directly is not necessarily false; one does not always have to use a fully controlled experiment to observe the facts of a social situation. Direct and imaginative study of cases will often suffice. Professor Herbert Blumer and Everett C. Hughes are leading examples of those who, to the best of my knowledge, do all these things with the strongest of sociological imaginations.

There are many ways of representing the individual as he reveals himself in his behavior and his words (inside and outside the interview situation). George H. Mead used the analogies of play and the game to develop a representation of interactive human behavior; Erving Goffman used the analogy of the stage drama to develop the same representation,<sup>7</sup> and George Homans was one of the first of several sociologists to use the analogy of the economic transaction to develop this representation.<sup>8</sup> All of these in-

<sup>7</sup> Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1959.

<sup>8</sup> George C. Homans, "Human Behavior as Exchange," *American Journal of Sociology*, 63 (1958), pp. 597-606; Homans, *Social Behavior* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1961). Willard Waller (*The Family*, Chapter 10. New York: Henry Holt, 1938) made some preliminary suggestions for considering the economic exchange as a paradigm for general human interaction, but it was not followed up until Homans. John B. Knox shows that some of the same ideas were expounded by Albert Chavannes as early as 1884: "The Concept of Ex-

changed a good deal of sociological imagination. But we must not forget that there are methodological and conceptual hazards to the use of analogies: none of these analogies represent exactly what is involved in most types of human interaction. Other good general representation schemes might be developed out of the *political compromise* in which the political leader arranges the best solution for a number of conflicting interest groups; out of the *religious ceremony* in which the priest acts out the communion of the people with the gods; out of the labor-management *collective bargaining* situation, and so on. All of these have value for pedagogical purposes and suggest hypotheses, but none are complete representations of the "truth" about human relations. Human relations *include* all of these model representations and an indefinitely large number of other variations. It takes a man with keen sociological imagination to develop a model representation, and this same type of man to see its limitations. It takes a man of sociological imagination to see similarities in apparent diversity—for example, among mental institutions, prisons, military units<sup>9</sup>—and a man of sociological imagination to see their significant differences.

Generations of sociologists have bemused themselves with developing classification schemes which emphasized differences and distinctions, and with pointing up similarities among the apparently diverse phenomena. These have all been provocative, and they have materially aided in teaching introductory sociology. But both in theory and method we sociologists should now insist on going beyond that. Theoretical sociological imagination in the future—both on the macroscopic and microscopic levels—should require not only the creation of concepts and propositions which bear some tested relationship to a range of social facts, but also the power to relate these *logically* to each other in the manner of a proper theoretician of a science (as the physicists and the economists have done for their concepts and propositions). As George Homans has correctly observed, so much of what passes as theory in sociology

change in Sociological Theory: 1884 and 1961," *Social Forces*, 41 (May, 1963), pp. 341-346.

<sup>9</sup> Erving Goffman, *Asylums*. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1961.

today is not theory at all, but I cannot agree with him that the only possible sociological theory is a reductionist psychological one.<sup>10</sup> If he would have looked down to the grass roots of sociology, he would find that we are working with imaginative and productive, if not wholly developed, theories in criminology, race relations, the family, industrial sociology, psychiatric sociology and many other research sub-fields. As I see it, the researchers—or at least some of them, the ones who start with a point of view and who have learned to ask crucial questions of their data—are the ones who are developing imaginative sociological theory today. Their chief lack so far is that they do not have the ability to develop their theories *systematically and logically*. Note that logic is not necessarily the same thing as mathematics. Although mathematical formulations of logical relationships might be useful for highly developed science, most of the efforts so far in mathematical sociology, except for their logical coherence, have lacked the qualities of good theory. Unfortunately, and to put it bluntly, few, if any, in that area have shown much sociological imagination.

Another need for sociological imagination in sociological theory is to solve, or at least come to grips, with one of the dilemmas of the founding fathers of sociology—a dilemma we have shunted aside in a closed compartment for several decades. This is the question whether human behavior should be seen as a resultant of objective forces or as a resultant of man's definitions or interpretation of his social world. Louis Wirth—following his studies of Marx, Weber, Thomas, and Mannheim—is one of the very few modern sociologists who came to grips with this problem. This dilemma exists in both macroscopic and microscopic research, and is not to be exactly equated with a distinction between behavioristic and symbolic theories. The rational man could realistically interpret the objective forces surrounding himself and decide which had long-range importance, and act in accord with these decisions even though the environment and his own behavior would be transformed symbolically first. On the other hand, behavioristic man

would have no way of selecting important stimuli out of the welter of objective stimuli in the environment and so would not necessarily act rationally in terms of the objective forces impinging on him. So we are not raising the question of behaviorism vs. symbolic interactionism here, rather we are raising the question whether man is more influenced by the surroundings themselves or by imaginative symbolic distortions he sometimes makes of them. I suppose the question I am posing is the age-old one: Under what circumstances is symbolic man rational and under what circumstances is he irrational? I suggest we devote some sociological imagination to this question. The answers would give us knowledge about innovation and creativity on the microscopic level, and about success or failure of social movements on the macroscopic level.

One more subject I wish to turn to, and that is the need to use sociological imagination to translate the knowledge, the theory, and the methods of sociology so they will be of use on the practical scene of on-going social action. I was one of those in the 1940's who fought against the divorce of science and social action for the social sciences, mainly because I saw it was impossible, and I wished to make the inevitable relationship a mutually fruitful one. My models in this effort were the world-experienced Gunnar Myrdal and the American-experienced Ernest Burgess, both of whom have used their science to build a better society, and their practical experience to build a better science. (I should also mention here Philip M. Hauser, who has shown sociological imagination in relating social science knowledge to practical public policy.) Although sociology is increasingly recognized as powerful in concept and valuable in application by social actionists and decision-makers, I am not sure we are approaching the ideal for a fruitful relationship. I see some sociologists seeking to delay social action, and being used by some decision-makers to delay social action, and for no other purpose. I see them happily diverting financial resources from needed social action to do more research in projects not designed to add in any way to practical knowledge. Among some sociologists today, there is a game of grantsmanship going on that pretends to relate scientific information

<sup>10</sup> George C. Homans, "Bringing Men Back In." *American Sociological Review*, 29 (1964), pp. 809-818.



to applied social goals; its only practical goal is to get funds for the researcher so that he himself can live better, impress his superiors, and control his inferiors—all at the expense of applied social goals.<sup>11</sup>

This is only one problem in answering the question of the optimal relationship of the objective social researcher and social action. These are ethical ones involving invasion of privacy, the use of human subjects in experimentation, the neglect of the purpose of the decision maker, and the "selling-out" of the research, which have been seriously discussed in recent years, and one can hope that we are moving toward a consensus among scientists as to the need for social ethics. There is little more I can add to this ethical discussion. But I do see another problem which reduces the optimum relationship between the objective social researcher and the applied social actionist. This is the obfuscatory concept and idiom; the exaggerated, over-generalized and even ill-founded conclusion from research; and the "mysterious" bandying about of the tools of the sociological trade. As I look at the applied field of inter-group relations, and particularly at some segments of the civil rights movement, I am appalled at the damage done by some sociologists. Whatever their use in sociological science might be, concepts like "power elite" and "power structure" have quite misled these social actionists, as have concepts like "indigenous person" and "the culture of poverty." I see some Negro leaders so impressed with the evidence that modern tech-

<sup>11</sup> The whole question of the "respectability" of the sociologist is dealt with systematically by Marshall Clinard, "The Sociologist's Quest for Respectability," *Sociological Quarterly*, 7 (Autumn, 1966), pp. 399-412.

nology—mainly automation—is soon to permit a drastic reduction in manpower in the secondary occupations, just as it already has in the primary occupations, that they are convinced that white America is already building concentration camps and points of exile where black America can be committed to genocide. Without realizing it, some sociologists are contributing to this paranoia among Negro intellectual leaders by discussing equivalents to concentration camps in purely hypothetical ways. These are merely examples, of course. What I am suggesting is that there is need for sociological imagination in working out some empirical ground rules in relating sociological science to applied social action, and that the ground rules need to cover an area broader than the ethical issues involved.

What I have sought to do throughout this paper is to indicate that there are a variety of sociological imaginations: to approach the variant material of sociology from different points of view, to handle our diversified tools of research, to develop different kinds of theory and handle different theoretical problems, and finally to relate sociological science to the applied decision-maker. I do not see one single kind of sociological imagination that can do all these things well, and have even suggested that a brilliant social researcher in one respect will be blind or stupid in another respect. The complete elaboration of these ideas would involve the development of a sociology of sociology. Rather than have specialists in this, who might be as unfortunately unproductive as most "sociologists of knowledge" have been, I suggest that all sociologists of imagination devote a corner of attention to these matters.